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27. The crosslinked, carboxyalkyl cellulose according to claim 26 wherein said carboxyalkyl cellulose is carboxymethyl cellulose.

28. The crosslinked, carboxyalkyl polysaccharide according to claim 2 wherein said crosslinking agent is selected from the group consisting of an electrolyte comprising a metal cation having a valency of 3 or greater; organic compounds comprising at least two carbon atoms and having at least two functional groups or functional ities capable of reacting in an aqueous solution with the carboxyl, hydroxyl, or amino group of a carboxyalkyl polysaccharide; phosphoryl chloride; and phosphoryl bromide.

29. The crosslinked, carboxyalkyl polysaccharide according to claim 28 wherein said crosslinking agent is an electrolyte comprising a metal cation having a valency of 3 or more.

30. The crosslinked, carboxyalkyl polysaccharide according to claim 29 wherein said crosslinking agent comprises an aluminum cation.

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31. The crosslinked, carboxyalkyl polysaccharide according to claim 2 wherein the weight ratio of water-soluble, carboxyalkyl polysaccharide to water is from about 1:2 to about 1:10.

32. The crosslinked, carboxyalkyl polysaccharide according to claim 31 wherein the weight ratio of water-soluble, carboxyalkyl polysaccharide to water is from about 1:2 to about 1:5.

33. The crosslinked, carboxyalkyl polysaccharide according to claim 2 wherein said crosslinked, carboxyalkyl polysaccharide is dried to remove at least about 50 weight percent of the water originally present in said mixture.

34. The crosslinked carboxyalkyl polysaccharide according to claim 2 wherein said crosslinked, carboxyalkyl polysaccharide has an initial Absorbency Under Load value of at least about 8.

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